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ABSTRACT

Many southern states have taken action to improve the effectiveness of teaching by increasing teacher salaries, establishing career ladder and incentive programs, and ensuring teachers' knowledge of the subject area they teach. Attention is also now being directed to improvement of teacher education programs, and many of the southern states are taking measures to ensure more stringent review and approval standards for teacher education programs. Recent changes in program approval now include the use of outcome measures such as passing rates on teacher certification tests. Other changes being instituted in various states include academic teacher education program reviews by higher education agencies; the mandating of national accreditation; increased emphasis on arts and science courses in the undergraduate program; a trend toward increasing school experiences as part of teacher education; and creation of special centers and teacher education projects at universities with teacher education programs. (CB)

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Teacher Education: Action by SREB States

July 1987

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Specific actions by states, colleges, and universities to improve teacher education are underway in the SREB states. Every SREB state has a group that is studying or has made recommendations for action to strengthen teacher education within present structures. Adding liberal arts course requirements, approving teacher education programs on the performance of the graduates, and more comprehensive supervised classroom work highlight the recent state initiatives.

Lynn Cornett
Southern Regional Education Board

Actions to improve the effectiveness of teaching have been central to educational reform efforts in the SREB states. These actions include:

- improving the teacher workplace through salary increases
- career ladder and incentive programs to change the structure of teaching (rewarding those who perform on-the-job and using the expertise of master teachers)
- ensuring teachers' knowledge of the subject matter taught

Setting standards for entrance into teacher education programs and for certification have been among the first actions taken by states. Testing for entrance into teacher education programs (basic skills), and for teacher certification (both subject matter and professional education testing) have been in place in most SREB states for several years. Standards have usually been set at minimal levels to begin with, especially on the tests, but states are beginning to raise standards. Substantial numbers of students do not pass the minimal tests--especially minority students, whose failure rates are sometimes twice as high as for others. Colleges of education usually get blamed for students not passing the tests. But often students fail the subject matter and general knowledge parts of the tests, not the professional education sections. Therefore, improvement depends on the quality of the total undergraduate programs, including courses taken in the college of arts and sciences.

Programs that evaluate beginning teachers in the classroom and provide assistance when needed were rare just a few years ago; now they are either in place or being developed in most SREB states.

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Now state actions to improve teacher education in the region are focusing on program standards and/or moving beyond meeting minimum testing requirements. The use of outcome measures, such as test scores and on-the-job evaluation for program approval, strengthening the undergraduate education of teachers by increasing the amount of liberal arts education required in addition to professional education, and increasing school-based experiences are among the new state standards.

Despite recent reports from individual campuses that teacher education enrollments are up, the latest degree data show that the number of graduates from teacher education programs in most SREB states continues to decrease. In 1983-84, 34,549 graduates were reported in SREB states--down 5 percent from a year earlier. By 1984-85, the number of teacher education degrees had slipped another 3 percent to 33,613. In Tennessee and Mississippi the number dropped 15 percent from 1983-84 to 1984-85; Maryland and Arkansas lost approximately 12 percent. Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and West Virginia showed increases in teacher education graduates over that period.

In the SREB states most new teachers graduate from public institutions; in fact, 80 percent are from public institutions. Over half of these graduates are from public institutions offering doctoral programs; 42 percent are from universities that offer master's degrees (most offer master's in education only), and only 6 percent graduate from colleges that offer four-year degrees only. Teacher education programs in the SREB states are found at virtually all public four-year institutions (nearly 200) and at almost 250 private institutions.

Review and Approval of Teacher Education Programs

Several states have revised state standards for approving teacher education programs for state certification of teachers. The state review process for program approval is used in all SREB states, with review teams periodically observing and collecting information about teacher education programs and giving state approval. In the past, few programs have been disapproved or eliminated through the process. That is changing.

Outcome Measures

Recent changes in program approval now include the use of outcome measures such as passing rates on teacher certification tests.

Alabama and Arkansas use teacher certification test scores to approve teacher education programs; Alabama is considering adding results from on-the-job evaluations.

Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas use or plan to use both test scores and on-the-job evaluations for program approval.

In 1985-86, 32 programs in Florida were placed on probation because less than 80 percent of their graduates passed the teacher certification tests. Four of the programs were dropped voluntarily by institutions; the rest remain on probation. In Georgia in 1983, 39 programs that did not have passing rates of 70 percent over a 5-year period were placed on probation. Plans for improvement were submitted to the Board of Regents, which provided consultants to the institutions. This year, 10 programs at two Georgia colleges were discontinued; 9 programs remain on probation. In Alabama, programs that have less than 60 percent of their students passing the certification test get special attention from the State Board of Education. Institutions must develop improvement plans and, if test scores are low two years in a row, on-site visits are made to provide assistance. The Alabama Governor's Review Commission has recommended that, as a part of continued program approval, each institution must monitor the performance of its graduates during the first year of teaching and provide assistance if performance is not adequate.

Standards for program approval passed this year by Arkansas call for teacher education programs to maintain an 80 percent pass rate on the professional education certification test, and an 80 percent pass rate for each individual program on subject area tests (for example, 80 percent of mathematics education program graduates must pass the mathematics specialty area test). In South Carolina, revised standards for program approval require that not only test scores but classroom performance of beginning teachers be used as criteria in approving programs. New program approval standards in Mississippi will use the results of National Teacher Examinations and standards for performance of teachers during their first year of teaching as part of new program approval requirements. A significantly high percentage of graduates will have to pass, or programs will be placed on probation. The standards, to be established later this year, will apply to 1988 graduates; on-the-job performance results will be used the next year. A Task Force on Preparation of Teachers appointed by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina has recommended a 70 percent pass rate on certification tests for all programs. The report also calls for reporting the results of statewide evaluation of teachers--especially during the early years--to colleges and universities for their use in improving programs.

Academic Program Review

Academic program reviews by higher education agencies have included teacher education programs in several states. Maryland is completing a study of teacher education programs that have been identified by factors such as enrollment, duplication, productivity, and quality. In 1985, the Florida Board of Regents commissioned an outside review team to make recommendations about teacher education. Recommendations included strengthening

school/college ties, eliminating unproductive programs, and reorganizing within institutions to increase the involvement of arts and sciences faculty with education faculty.

During 1984, the Kentucky Council on Higher Education, the State Board of Education, and the governor sponsored a study by an outside review team which examined teacher education and teacher certification issues. A follow-up task force, appointed by the state superintendent of instruction, has recommended reviewing programs that prepare secondary and middle grade teachers to make certain that teacher education programs correspond directly to teaching assignments in the schools. State Board of Education actions are expected soon.

The Georgia Board of Regents also commissioned a review of teacher education programs by an outside review team. The Georgia Board of Regents and the Georgia State Board of Education have established a joint committee of board members to make recommendations to improve teacher education and certification. The Chancellor of the University System of Georgia has declared the improvement of teacher education as one of the major university-wide goals. A liaison committee from the Texas State Board of Education and the Coordinating Board for the Texas College and University System has been reactivated, with teacher education as a major focus. Institutions have been called upon to strengthen the core curriculum for all students.

A Louisiana Board of Regents' Task Force on Teacher Preparation and Certification is considering a set of recommendations. The task force is compiling ideas from each Louisiana teacher education institution. All institutions have been asked to form an institution-wide committee to react to recommendations from recent national reports on teacher education . The West Virginia Board of Regents and State Board of Education sponsored a conference to address teacher education issues in the state. The Joint Commission on Professional Development, appointed by the boards, will develop recommendations on teacher education to be presented later in 1987.

National Accreditation

National accreditation by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is currently held by about 40 percent of the approximately 450 institutions in the region that offer teacher education programs. NCATE accredits teacher education colleges or departments, not individual programs. Recently redesigned NCATE standards now place a greater emphasis on experiences in the schools throughout the curriculum. Programs will be required to follow graduates and provide assistance to first-year teachers, when necessary. Under the guidelines, student competence and progress are to be monitored throughout the program using measures such as test results. The impact of the new standards and changes in programs is still unknown. Voluntary in most states, NCATE accreditation is generally sought and held by public institutions. North Carolina and Arkansas have recently mandated NCATE accreditation for state approval of teacher education programs. Kentucky recommendations for institutions

using NCATE are to combine the NCATE review process with the state review. Tennessee is calling for NCATE accreditation or the demonstration of comparable standards. The state will also consider additional requirements needed to implement its new teacher education program.

In Mississippi, state program review will be combined with the NCATE review for those institutions wanting NCATE accreditation. The Alabama Governor's Review Commission recommended that all teacher education programs gain NCATE accreditation; however, the State Board of Education deemed NCATE accreditation should be voluntary for institutions.

Academic Studies in the Undergraduate Program

New standards reflect a concern that undergraduate programs need to include a greater emphasis on arts and sciences courses and that renewal of teacher education can take place within a four-year undergraduate program. Arkansas requires that teacher education students take the same general education as students in other undergraduate programs. In addition, those who are planning to teach in secondary schools must complete the institutional requirements for an academic major in a teaching field. The Tennessee State Board of Education has just adopted requirements calling for all teacher education programs to include a rigorous liberal arts core and an arts and sciences major or equivalent study at the upper level. The University of North Carolina Board of Governors has adopted a policy that requires all undergraduate education majors to complete a major in an academic discipline.

The Select Committee on Higher Education in Texas recommended that all prospective teachers major in an academic subject and minor in education and that all undergraduate degrees in elementary and secondary education would be eliminated. The 1987 legislature enacted a bill that requires an academic major for all teachers (which may be interdisciplinary, as in reading), with no more than 18 education hours for certification (including student teaching). The Virginia Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education has recommended an undergraduate arts and sciences degree for prospective teachers, with 18 professional education hours (excluding student teaching). The Alabama Governor's Education Reform Commission Subcommittee on Teacher Education and Preparation has recommended that rigorous academic programs including upper-division coursework be developed for all teachers. Specialty courses designed for teachers should not be considered general education and majors for teachers should reflect the subject matter taught in the public schools. The Alabama State Board of Education is studying the Commission's recommendation and developing additional policies on teacher education. The Board has initiated programs this year to attract liberal arts graduates into teaching through a fifth year program. Liberal arts graduates take an additional 12 hours in subject matter at the graduate level and complete a master's degree with courses in education. Other state requirements include passing necessary certification tests. Over 500 students are enrolled this year in the program, which is offered at 19 institutions.

The Florida Community College System reviewed the role of community colleges in teacher education. One recommendation encouraged community colleges and universities to work jointly to define and strengthen the general education core and the subject matter preparation for prospective teachers. (In Florida, almost half of the teacher education graduates begin their college careers in community colleges.) A recent report of the Oklahoma Higher Education Task Force called for reduction of education courses in teacher education programs, with a strengthened general education curriculum and an emphasis on gaining experience in classrooms. The review done for the Georgia Board of Regents recommended that the university system and university presidents integrate liberal arts and education during the undergraduate programs through joint efforts of a wide range of faculty and administrators at each campus.

Increasing School-Based Experiences

The trend toward increasing school experiences as part of teacher education programs is evident in new standards in several states. Arkansas will require observation and experience in the schools during the freshman or sophomore years for prospective teachers. Students at the junior and senior levels are to have supervised experiences in the schools. The practicum (in-school experience) is to be 12 weeks and be supervised jointly by college and school personnel. Procedures are to be established for selection of faculty and school supervisors.

The 1987 Texas legislature has mandated a one-year induction program, with supervision by teachers, administrators, and college and university faculty. The program is to be developed cooperatively by the State Board of Education and the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System. Tennessee is developing a first-year supervised program for beginning teachers. (Student teaching will be eliminated from college programs.)

North Carolina plans to support school-college partnerships to a greater degree. A program of competitive grants has been recommended that includes master public school teachers on the faculties of teacher preparation programs. Clinical teaching would be strengthened through paid summer experiences in the schools for prospective teachers and supervised clinical teaching internships during the first year of teaching. School-based research projects involving school and college faculty will be initiated. This and other recommendations prepared by a state task force of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors has been funded by 1987 legislation for $2 million in 1987-88 and $5.3 million in 1988-89. As a follow-up to a 1985 statewide conference on teacher education sponsored by the Texas Commission of Higher Education and the Commissioner of Education, colleges and universities and school districts have developed projects to work cooperatively on educational reform.

The external review committee for the Georgia Board of Regents recommended that student teaching be extended to 15 or 16 weeks. (Most programs in Georgia now use a 10-week quarter

for student teaching.) The committee also recommended that a limited number of demonstration schools be designated as training sites for future teachers and that funding be developed so that education faculty, paid on the same basis as teaching a graduate course, could provide services for schools.

In West Virginia, the governor has proposed a $3.1 million "Lighthouse Schools Project." Under the proposal, 10 schools would be targeted for special programs with an expansion to additional schools later. Innovations might include using the schools as model teacher training projects to continue state efforts underway to promote effective teaching in all the schools.

In Alabama, the recommendations from the Governor's Commission ask each institution to monitor its graduates and to provide assistance during the first year of teaching. The Commission also recommended that supervisors and mentor student teachers be carefully selected and receive release time, stipends, and university credit and privileges. Revised funding, which takes into account work in the schools, was also recommended.

Centers and Special Teacher Education Projects

Several states have created special centers at universities for improving teaching and teacher education. In Maryland, the State Board of Higher Education in conjunction with several institutions has established three Teacher Education Centers of Excellence--Coppin State College (Critical Thinking and Testing); Morgan State (Science and Mathematics Education); and Towson State (Writing and Communication). The University of Virginia's Center for the Liberal Arts is supported through the Council of Higher Education's Funds for Excellence. Programs are sponsored throughout the state to bring together teachers and college faculty in the arts and sciences to examine curriculum and improve teaching in Virginia's high schools.

Tennessee's 1984 legislation established Centers of Excellence at all state universities. The Center of Excellence on Teacher Education Evaluation at Tennessee Technological University started its work in 1986. The Center is focusing on the development and implementation of models for evaluating teacher education programs in the state.

In South Carolina, 1984 legislation provided that grants be made to institutions to develop centers of excellence in teacher education. Administered by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, the program was funded at $150,000 in 1985-86 and $400,000 in 1986-87. State funding also supports a center at Winthrop College for the recruitment of teachers; 21 public and private institutions in the state belong to the consortium and are involved in projects such as attracting minorities to teaching and working with high school students to promote teaching as a career.

The 1986 Virginia General Assembly appropriated $1 million to two institutions over two years to improve their graduates' passing rates on state teacher certification examinations. Plans were developed by the institutions, the State Department of Education, and the Council of Higher Education. Norfolk State University is revising curricula, providing assistance to underprepared students, and creating an assessment center to evaluate student progress. Virginia State University has developed special diagnostic tests and individual program planning.

The Kentucky Council for Higher Education recently funded a Center of Excellence at the University of Louisville's College of Education. The Center will develop projects with Jefferson County Public Schools. The emphasis will be on establishing professional development schools and revising teacher preparation programs. College and school faculty will work jointly in the schools, and teachers and administrators will be clinical instructors in teacher education programs.

SREB Study on College Leadership

States are not alone in taking action for quality improvements in teacher education. Colleges and universities in the SREB states also are directing attention to strengthening programs. SREB has a project underway to highlight the changes in preparing teachers at colleges and universities throughout the region. In-depth case studies will be undertaken at several institutions to provide specific information on how presidents, academic officers, deans, and faculty are providing leadership on improving the quality of teacher preparation.

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